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**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
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**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
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BEM/DWS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 06-04

DATE: 01/17/2006

FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	EP	<input type="checkbox"/>	★

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: Child Care Certification Rules: Prevention of Childhood Lead-Poisoning

CROSS REFERENCE: None

EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 17, 2006

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to inform the certifying agencies on risks with lead paint in certified homes and to give instructions on how to prevent lead poisoning in certified settings.

BACKGROUND

In Wisconsin, 3,313 children tested positive for lead poisoning in 2004. It is likely that the actual exposures were even higher because only a fraction of children are tested for lead.

Lead poisoning is the most serious environmental health threat facing young children in the U.S. Lead poisoning in young children causes impairment of mental and physical development. Wisconsin has adopted the mission to eliminate childhood lead poisoning by 2010. The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program web site can be found at:
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm>.

Wisconsin Statistics:

In Wisconsin, 3,313 children were positive for lead poisoning in 2004. The lead poisoning statistics can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/lead/Data/index.asp>. The number of lead poisoned children in each year has been declining. The lead poisoning prevention program is working to eliminate the problem by 2010. Day care certifiers play an important role in preventing lead-poisoning in certified settings.

Effects of Lead on Young Children

- Lead poisoning is the most serious environmental health threat facing young children in the U.S.
- Lead poisoning in young children causes impairment of mental and physical development.
- Lead poisoning causes higher costs in health care, special education, law enforcement, courts, incarceration, etc.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

Most poisonings of children occur by exposure to lead in paint.

Childhood lead poisoning can be prevented by:

- Controlling lead hazards (see the EPA website at www.epa.gov/lead/);
- Decreasing lead exposure; and
- Increasing awareness among parents, property owners, child care providers, health care providers, home visitors, housing contractors and others interacting routinely with families with young children.

Children at Risk

At greatest risk of lead exposure is the child under the age of 6 who lives in a home or regularly visits a daycare or home built before 1978.

Why are children at greater risk?

- Normal hand-to-mouth behavior. Children between 6 and 24 months are at greatest risk because they are mobile and crawl and play on the floor where lead dust often settles. The child also explores his/her environment by putting everything into his/her mouth.
- Rapidly developing nervous system makes children vulnerable to the effects of lead.
- Children have a higher rate of absorption compared to adults.

How does lead get into the body?

- Ingested - mouth (most common source of exposure for children).
- Inhaled - nose (occupational exposure).
- ***Lead dust is not absorbed through the skin.***

Effects of Lead-Poisoning:

The long-term impact of lead poisoning is due to the toxic effect of lead on normal brain development:

- Impacts biological activities at many different cellular levels.
- Disrupts main structural components of the blood brain barrier.
- Interferes with the development of synapses in the brain.

Synapse development in the brain is most sensitive between 6 to 18 months of age. This is the same phase when normal activity of the child increases exposure to lead sources. This is the age when a child starts to become mobile and will start crawling on the floor and climbing holding on structures like window sills, etc. Floors and window sills can contain lead dust from deteriorating paint.

The toxic effects of lead on the brain disrupt normal development of:

- Emotional response
- Memory
- Learning
- Timed reactions
- Hearing

The effects of lead poisoning result in:

- Classroom disruption
- Increased costs for special education
- Increased rates of high school drop out
- Anti-social behavior (juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy)
- Poor school performance, especially related to skills needed during “critical transition periods” in learning.

The life-long impact of lead toxicity on a child’s development makes *PREVENTION* all the more urgent. Prevention is extremely important because there is no cure for lead poisoning. Treatment of the environment is the **primary** prevention.

CERTIFICATION RULES AND LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

The day care certification rules, DWD 55 do not mention flaking paint as a hazard, however, the “general hazard” rule DWD 55.08(2)(c) reads: “The home shall be free of hazards...” and 55.08(2)(e) “Outdoor play areas shall be free of hazards...” Flaking or peeling paint is a serious hazard for children.

The lead was eliminated from the paint in 1978. This means that paint in houses built prior to that year, most likely contain lead. It is important that painted surfaces in these houses are well maintained. The certifier must assure that the premises shall have no flaking or deteriorating paint on exterior or interior surfaces in areas accessible to children. The certifying staff should be paying careful attention to paint on porches, window sills and floors since these are the areas where the paint is most likely to peel and deteriorate faster than other surfaces. Old furniture can also contain lead based paint.

If the certified home has flaking or peeling paint, the certifier should not certify the home until the problem has been resolved. The certifier should contact the local health department to get more information on ways to take care of various lead paint problems. Also, informational brochures can be ordered from the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm> free of charge.

DHFS/Childhood Lead Prevention Program, Rm 150
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The Lead Poisoning Prevention Program also has maps on all Wisconsin counties showing areas where children have been poisoned. The maps can be found at: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/lead/Maps/index.HTM>.

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★Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

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